

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

**Consultation on the proposal to remove Lyme
Regis Church Cliff Beach from the list of
designated bathing waters**

Summary of responses

January 2016

Background

Bathing waters are popular beaches and inland waters that attract a large number of bathers and have been designated under the Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC). Water quality is tested during the bathing season, which in England runs from 15 May to 30 September, for compliance with the Directive's standards. The objective is to protect bathers' health against faecal pollution.

The Directive applies to "...any element of surface water where the competent authority expects a large number of people to bathe and has not imposed a permanent bathing prohibition..." (Article 1.2).

Beach usage at Lyme Regis Church Cliff beach was surveyed during summer 2014 because it had been anecdotally reported to be little used for bathing. On 10 August 2015 Defra launched an informal consultation by publishing the evidence for de-designation on its website and emailing it to key stakeholders. The consultation ran until 30 September 2015.

Analysis of responses

We received 81 individual responses and 13 that were identifiable as part of a campaign to oppose de-designation.

Of the individual responses:

- 7 were in favour of de-designation;
- 74 opposed de-designation.

Two of the responses supporting de-designation commented on the negative publicity that would result from poor water quality and failure of standards.

Of the responses opposing de-designation:

- 46 commented on the proposal;
- Nine refer to taking part in surfing, kayaking or other water sports at the beach. The survey counted a total of 4 water sport participants over 20 days. Any discrepancy could be because Church Cliff Beach is at one end of the bay and the survey only covered the Church Cliff Beach area;
- 32 commented on water quality and the perceived impact of de-designation;
- Three commented on work being carried out during 2014 to improve sea defences and create a new walkway close to the beach. They considered that 2014 was not representative and visitor numbers could increase in the future.

Water quality

Since the consultation water quality at Lyme Regis Church Cliff Beach has been classified as Poor, based on the 2012 – 2015 data set.

Final decision

Lyme Regis Church Cliff Beach will be removed from the list of bathing waters before the 2016 bathing season on the grounds of low usage for bathing.

The way forward

The European Commission will be notified of the decision when the annual bathing water inventory is submitted before the beginning of the bathing season.

Annex A: list of respondents

Surfers Against Sewage

93 private individuals



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